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## A PEASANT OF ASSISI

BY AGNES LEE

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THE sun that traced of old the Umbrian Friars  
Hung saffron in the mist of eventide.  
The Angelus from a far tower had told  
Its rosary of sounds and silences.  
I wandered where the purple winding valley,  
Steeped in a bloom of seven hundred years,  
Still breathes so gently of Assisi's power  
That I, to-day's deserter, went half watchful  
At any little turning of a hill  
To come upon the hooded Saint himself  
In some sweet colloquy with bird or beast.  
O purple winding valley, saffron sun,  
And silver thoughts! When lo, at the path's edge,  
Agleam from out a shadow rose a shrine,  
Beneath whose ancient ark a streamlet ran  
Along a dip of moss-enamelled stones.  
Within a field a tawny peasant youth  
Stood leaning on his hoe, content from toil.  
And at my beck he dropped his hoe and hastened.  
And, as I questioned of the place, his eyes  
Grew soft, his answer coming clear, and eager  
With repetition of the names he loved.

### THE LEGEND

Lady, hither to this nook one noonday  
Blessèd Francis walked with Brother Leo.  
All the sky was fire that scorched the grasses.  
Brother Leo lagged behind, entreating:  
"O, forspent am I! O, find me water!  
Verily my thirst hath overtried me!"  
Everywhere sought Blessèd Francis vainly.  
For the land was parched and stream-forsaken.

Then upon the ground sank Brother Leo.  
And he slept. Beside him Blessèd Francis  
Knelt and prayed full meekly and devoutly.  
And he rose. And Brother Leo wakened.  
At their feet, amid the stones upwelling,  
Crystal water bubbled, laughed and sparkled!  
And their hearts were glad. And Brother Leo  
Slaked his mighty thirst. And Blessèd Francis  
Stooped, and gathered to his lips the freshness.  
And they went their way with praising pulses.

Here the shrine was set to mark the story.  
Honored is my simple tongue to tell it.  
All is true. Ah, who shall doubt it ever?  
All is true. For, lady, look: The Water!

AGNES LEE.